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THE LATER AMERICAN POLICY OF GEORGE CANNING

THE figure of Canning has hardly yet emerged from the mists of contemporary eulogy or depreciation. The policy of the man, of whom Lord Acton said "that no English Foreign Secretary *equalled* Canning", has not yet been fully understood even in its broad outlines. In America the greatness of the man is recognized, but the actual details of his policy are still somewhat obscure. His exact relations and concern with the Monroe doctrine are still not absolutely clear; and if this is the case with regard to that important phase of policy, it is still more the case with regard to his later diplomatic work. The old idea about Canning, expressed and championed by Stapleton, was that he was practically the author and suggester of the Monroe doctrine. The brilliant deductions of Mr. Reddaway, combined with the later research of Mr. W. C. Ford, have done much to define the limits and extent of his contribution to that memorable stroke of policy. It is at least clear that the Monroe doctrine had, in many important respects, been already formulated by American statesmen. Canning admitted the United States to be the leading power in America. Further, he rendered her an essential service in forcing Polignac, by a threat of war on October 9, 1823, to disclaim any idea of French aggression or influence to restore the revolted colonies to Spain. The publication of the presidential message on December 2, 1823, aided Canning materially in his European policy, because the European powers took that message in the sense of an unqualified support of British policy by the United States. But it is now known that Canning disapproved of that part of the presidential message which contained the first statement of the Monroe doctrine, when it announced that the continent of America would in future be closed to colonization by European powers. What is not known is how strong were his feelings on this point, and the means and policy by which he designed to render inoperative this part of the Monroe doctrine.

The object of the present article is to show that the later American policy of George Canning was intended to defeat certain claims and pretensions of the Monroe doctrine. These were the principle which forbade future colonization in America to European powers,

and the principle which tended to make America a separate world from Europe. The motives which led Canning to recognize the Spanish-American republics, to send an envoy to the congress of Panama, and to take up a firm attitude on the Oregon question were all influenced and indeed conditioned by this idea. Adams, in formulating the presidential message, had denied the right of any European power to intervene in Spanish America, expressly on the ground of the withdrawal of Americans from European interests. Canning himself asserted the doctrine of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, and was the great foe of the Holy Alliance, which desired so to intervene. His great fear was that the world would be divided into a league of worn-out governments in Europe and new and vigorous republics in America. He was resolved therefore that England should maintain active political relations between one continent and the other, and thereby be enabled to enact England's favorite political rôle of arbiter between conflicting claims or pretensions. Hence he was prepared to introduce America into Europe and Europe into America, to deny the exclusive pretensions of the Holy Alliance to intervene in Spanish America, and check the exclusive pretensions of Adams to place his continent in a water-tight compartment and reserve America for the Americans.

Canning's famous boast that he had "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old" has often been misunderstood. A recent writer, Colonel E. M. Lloyd,¹ even professes to doubt whether this was really the cause of recognition. There can however be no question of this, for several memoranda on the subject exist.² In them are detailed the inconvenience of the French continuing to occupy Spain:

¹ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, N. S., XVIII. 93 *et seqq.*

² Some historians, for example Colonel Lloyd and E. J. Stapleton (*Some Official Correspondence of George Canning*, 2 vols., 1887, I. 213-214), have been misled by the fact that there were three memoranda: (1) A memorandum, apparently written by Canning, but perhaps corrected by Liverpool, indorsed with his approval, and circulated to the Cabinet (about November 30); see Wellington's *Despatches*, N. S., II. 354-358, and Charles D. Yonge, *Life and Administration of Liverpool* (3 vols., 1868), III. 297-304. (2) A memorandum—supplementary and qualifying—circulated in consequence of information received from Granville. It is undated, but must be about December 1-6. (3) A minute, embodying the collective opinion of the Cabinet, laid before the King by Canning on December 14, 1824, together with No. 1. This is in A. G. Stapleton, *George Canning and his Times* (1859), 407-411.

No. 2 is the most interesting, characteristic, and important. It is the memorandum "which enabled us to carry Columbia too [as well as Mexico] at the Cabinet". Canning to Granville, December 17, 1824. It is to be found in Vansittart's papers at the British Museum, Ad. MSS. 31, 237, f. 258. So far as I know, its existence, as well as its substance, have hitherto been unknown and

The great practical question however for us seems to be how, in the event of an actual incorporation of the resources of Spain with those of France such an accession to the power of France can best be counteracted. I have no hesitation in saying this must be by a separation of the resources of Spanish America from those of Spain: and it is (at least in this point of view) a fortunate circumstance that this state of things [*i. e.*, the virtual independence of Spanish America] has already taken place; and that we are in a situation to avail ourselves of it.

This is merely a prosaic version of the famous rhetorical phrase. Canning is looking to America to redress the inequalities of Europe. Though this is of some interest as indicating the real cause of Canning's recognition, our purpose is with the American, not the European aspect of that recognition. Canning goes on to advocate the recognition not only of Buenos Ayres, but of Colombia and Mexico, from two motives. One motive is that Colombia and Mexico have English capital sunk in mining and territorial concerns of a more permanent interest than "mere commercial speculations". Then comes a passage of immense interest and importance:

The other and perhaps still more powerful motive is my apprehension of the ambition and ascendancy of the U[nited] S[tates] of Am[erica]: It is obviously the policy of that Gov[ernmen]t to connect itself with all the powers of America in a general Transatlantic League, of which it would have the sole direction. I need only say how inconvenient such an ascendancy may be in time of peace, and how formidable in case of war.

I believe we now have the opportunity (but it may not last long) of opposing a powerful barrier to the influence of the U[nited] S[tates] by an amicable connection with Mexico,¹ which from its position must be either subservient to or jealous of the U[nited] S[tates]. In point of population and resources it is at least equal to all the rest of the Spanish

unsuspected. The memorandum is unsigned; the handwriting appears to be Vansittart's, possibly with two corrections by Canning. The general character of the opinions, agreeing precisely with Canning's letters of the time to Granville, leave no doubt that the real author or inspirer is Canning. Mr. F. L. Paxson, in his able work on *The Independence of the South-American Republics* (1903), is quite unaware of the existence of this document, and his knowledge of English records is large.

¹ Italics my own. Compare with this passage the more unofficial and even more emphatic declaration in the letter of Canning to Frere, January 8, 1825, printed in Gabrielle Festing, *John Hookham Frere and his Friends* (1899), 267-268, and quoted in my *Life of Canning* (1905), 188: "The thing is done. . . . The Yankees will shout in triumph; but it is they who lose most by our decision. The great danger of the time—a danger which the policy of the European System would have fostered, was a division of the World into European and American, Republican and Monarchical; a league of worn-out Gov[ernmen]ts, on the one hand, and of youthful and st[ir]ring Nations, with the U[nited] States at their head, on the other. *We* slip in between; and plant ourselves in Mexico. The Un[ited] States have gotten the start of us in vain; and we link once more America to Europe. Six months more—and the mischief would have been done." Almost every word of this is of immense importance.

colonies; and may naturally expect to take the lead in its connections with the powers of Europe. I by no means think it at present necessary to go *beyond the mere relations of amity and commercial intercourse*; but if we hesitate much longer, and especially if our commercial treaty [July 23, 1824] with Buenos Ayres should not take effect, all the new states will be led to conclude that we regret their friendship upon principle, as of a dangerous and revolutionary character, and will be driven to throw themselves under the protection of the U[nited] S[tates], as the only means of security.

The importance of these words is equal to their emphasis, for they form the key to Canning's future American policy. He resumes that line of secret policy, which the younger Pitt had held in reserve, in order to checkmate any pretensions on the part of the United States. In 1790 Pitt had declared the right of England to Nootka Sound, as against Spain. In 1798, before the Spanish colonies revolted, he had coquetted with Miranda,¹ the first of Spanish-American liberators. There can be no doubt that in the latter instance Pitt saw the advantage of keeping up an understanding with South America, in order to check any claims or aggressions of the United States. Canning now, and under different circumstances, resumed this policy.² He meant to indicate to the South-American states that their true friend was distant England, not the adjacent English-speaking land.

During his later years commercial disputes and disputes about the slave-trade (in the second of which, at least, Canning did his best to conciliate the United States) served to increase irritation, but would not alone have sufficed to change his attitude. Canning had shown toward the United States diplomatists a large-minded tolerance and a frankness very unusual in diplomacy. He had paid the United States the exquisite compliment of saying that England would model her neutrality during the war between France and Spain on the neutrality toward England shown "in the presidency of Washington and secretaryship of Jefferson". Yet American statesmen certainly viewed Canning with undeserved suspicion.³ The

¹ Paxson, *The Independence of the South-American Republics*, 47.

² This policy is indicated, but only indicated, in my *Life of Canning*, 188. At that time I had not sufficient proofs to state it more emphatically. "The recognition was certainly opportune, it bound closer the new States to England, it restrained the pretensions of the Yankees, and preserved Cuba to Spain. The Panama Congress . . . was overshadowed by Canning, and partly through his influence the alliance between the United States and the South American Republics was never formed."

³ See W. C. Ford, "John Quincy Adams and the Monroe Doctrine", *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, VIII. 38, on Adams's suspicions, and see Rush to Adams, November 26, 1823, in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, second series, XV. 430-433. Both thought Canning did not really desire to separate

failure of his negotiations with Rush in the September of 1823, and the proclamation of the Monroe doctrine, in its original and limited form, in the presidential message of December 2, 1823, alarmed him and revealed to him these suspicions. Henceforward he took up an attitude of opposition, or rather of armed neutrality, prepared to uphold what he conceived to be the claims of England against those of the United States. He was firm and yet cautious and reasonable, and his plan seems to have been to detach the South-American states from alliance with or dependence on the United States.

It will be best to discuss this later aspect of his policy under three heads: first to describe the exact amount of intercourse and diplomatic relation Canning felt England should observe with a South-American state; secondly to indicate, by a description of his influence on the congress of Panama, his policy toward Spanish America as a whole and its relations to the United States; thirdly to show in what light he regarded the question of Oregon, as affecting other parts of his American policy.

In his instructions given on February 28, 1826,¹ to Lord Ponsonby, appointed minister plenipotentiary to Buenos Ayres, Canning defines his view of the normal relations and attitude of England toward Spanish-American states. Ponsonby is to communicate the "anxiety of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] to restore and preserve peace among the new states of America; or the deep interest, which in the opinion of this Government, those states have, in avoiding to give room, by their differences with each other, for the interference of foreigners in their political concerns". An embittered quarrel was in progress between Brazil and Buenos Ayres over the possession of Montevideo. In a supplementary despatch of March 18, 1826, Canning discusses the claims of the two governments. Ponsonby is to divert "the Brazilian Minister from any attempt to change the practical question at issue [the possession of Montevideo] into one of abstract legitimate right". The Emperor of Brazil had apparently thought of recognizing the "unextinguished rights of Spain" to Montevideo, and thus depriving Buenos Ayres of any claim. Canning therefore instructs Ponsonby as follows: "important as the question of Monte Video may be to the Brazilian Gov[ernment], it is scarcely less important that the discussion of that question should

from the Holy Alliance, whereas that was the main object of all his European policy. I cannot understand Mr. Paxson's contention in his *Independence of the South-American Republics*, 250, that England's policy was "legitimet in its real sympathies to the end". In view of the facts now known about Canning's attack upon the Holy Alliance, this seems to me untenable.

¹ Public Record Office, Foreign Office, Buenos Ayres 12.

not be conducted on such principles, or supported on their side by such arguments, as to array against the monarchy of Brazil the common feeling and common interests of all the Republican States of Spanish America." Canning then warns the Brazilian government of trying "too high" the patience of Bolivar, who is being incited to undertake a war against Brazil, "for the express purpose of overturning a Monarchy, which stands alone on the vast continent of America, and which is considered by those enamoured of democratical forms of Government, as essentially inconsistent with the secure existence of the American Republics". Canning suggests that Buenos Ayres has the strongest claim to Montevideo and has moreover force to back it. But if Montevideo were transferred to Buenos Ayres, it would still be reasonable "to secure to Brazil an uninterrupted enjoyment of the navigation of the river Plate". The British government would guarantee the observance of such stipulations. And though "on the general principle of avoiding as much as possible engagements of this character" the British government would prefer to stand aside, it would give this guaranty, "if it were desired by both parties . . . rather than that the treaty should not be concluded". Great Britain, "while scrupulously neutral in conduct" during the war, "cannot fail to be in favour of that Belligerent, who shall have shewn the readiest disposition to bring that dispute to a friendly termination". A secret instruction accompanies the despatch, informing Ponsonby that in case of "any essential change . . . in the form of government his functions will be suspended", and that he is "studiously to keep aloof from all political intrigues and all contentions of party in B[uenos] A[yres]".

Ponsonby's efforts at mediation and his attempts to interpose the friendly office of Great Britain between Brazil and Buenos Ayres ended in failure, and war began. Canning at once wrote (November 27, 1826¹): "As to taking part with either side in the Contest your Lordship cannot too peremptorily repress any expectation of that nature." He then proceeds to explain the failure of the negotiations. "There is much of the Spanish character in the inhabitants of the Colonial Establishments of Spain: and there is nothing in the Spanish character more striking than its impatience of foreign advice, and its suspicion of gratuitous service." His original instructions had foreseen that the suggestion respecting Montevideo "was not unlikely to excite a jealousy of some design favourable to British interests. Such a jealousy has been openly inculcated by the publick press of the United States of North America, and no doubt secretly

¹ Public Record Office, F. O., Buenos Ayres 13.

by their diplomatic Agents." He advises Ponsonby therefore "to let that matter drop entirely", unless Buenos Ayres itself should raise it. The best chance to suggest their doing so would be by "some slight manifestation of resentment at any such misconstruction of our motives." The last instruction of Canning on this point was to Ponsonby on February 21, 1827¹: "Mr. Gordon [the new ambassador] will press the many considerations which render peace essential to the interests and safety of Brazil . . . with all the means in his power short of that degree of importunity, which after the repeated refusal, would become derogatory to the dignity of Great Britain".

Cobbett called Canning "Aeolus",² in contempt of the policy by which Canning sought to make England the arbiter of the world, by balancing parties and reconciling opinions in Europe. The policy is here seen, as applied to the New World. Non-intervention is strictly laid down as a principle, and is departed from only in the instance of offering a guaranty respecting Montevideo, and in that instance only in case both contracting parties agreed to and wished for it. Some suspicion of the United States is shown, and a clear desire expressed to maintain the monarchical principle in Brazil, not indeed by force of arms but by moral influence, and by dissuading its monarchical government from acts which might irritate the republics. This was to prevent the world's being split into two parts, one consisting entirely of effete monarchies, the other exclusively of vigorous republics. If a moderate constitutional monarchy, in the shape of Brazil, were to remain firmly established on the republican continent, England would thus be enabled to be arbiter between the New World and the Old, and hold the balance between the conflicting principles of despotism and democracy.

Canning's policy toward individual American states has thus been illustrated; it remains to describe it from the point of view of the American continent as a whole, and especially in its relation to the United States. This is best to be discerned in the negotiations relative to the congress of Panama, and in the various questions which there came up for discussion. The congress was announced with the most extravagant boasts and rodomontades, fully worthy of the swaggering Don Guzmans and Don Alvarados of Spanish romance. Bolivar and his friends frequently spoke of it as one of the most important events of the world's history. Vidiaurre, one of

¹ *Ibid.*

² In reference of course to Canning's famous application of the quotation "Celsa sedet Aeolus arce" to his own policy.

the Peruvian representatives at the congress, communicated his generous emotions to the press in the following fashion.¹ Other representatives disclaimed the responsibility for his communication, but it represented—more or less—the general feeling of the time:

An entire world is about to witness our labours. . . . From the first sovereign, to the last inhabitant of the Southern hemisphere nobody is indifferent to our task. This will probably be the last attempt to ascertain whether Mankind can be happy. Companions! the field of glory—cleared by Bolivar, Sn. Martin, O'Higgins, Guadalupe, and many others superior to Hercules and Theseus, is before us. Our names are about to be written either in immortal praise or in eternal opprobrium. Let us raise ourselves above a thousand millions of inhabitants, and may a noble pride inspire us, likening us to God himself on that day, when He gave the first laws to the Universe.

These aspirants after the fame of Moses, and even of God Himself, may not have had their names written "in eternal opprobrium", but they are hardly entitled to "immortal praise".

The gigantic pretensions of the congress were only equalled by its eventual failure. But it is at least interesting, in so far as the decision of Canning to send a representative to the congress necessitated a clear definition of English policy, covering the whole field of American affairs. In 1822 Canning had broken up the congress of the despots at Verona, but in 1826 he showed no desire to break up or dissolve the congress of the republicans at Panama. That congress was summoned by Bolivar, and was intended primarily to induce the Spanish-American states to form a united league against Spain, and force her to grant them recognition. Incidentally the congress naturally tended to discuss other questions than those of war, such as free trade, international law, the Cuban question, and so forth. England and the United States² were invited to send representatives. Canning quietly assented, but the question formed a thorny subject of debate in the Congress and Senate of the United States. Canning selected a Mr. Dawkins as the British representative, and began his instructions on March 17, 1826,³ by informing him that the sole object of despatching him was to "obtain the most regular and correct information of its proceedings, and to assure the American States collectively of the friendly sentiments and the lively interest in their welfare and tranquillity" felt and expressed by the British Government. He deduces the motive of summoning an English

¹ Translation sent by Dawkins to Canning.

² The delegates from the United States never reached Panama at all. One of them died; the other did not go on his mission; and at Panama the congress was therefore without representation from the United States!

³ Public Record Office, F. O., Colombia 50*.

representative to have been "a due sense of the benefits which they [the American states] have derived and continue to derive from a friendly intercourse with Great Britain, and a very natural desire to increase the importance of that assembly in the estimation of the Old World".

Two subjects mentioned in these instructions may be speedily dismissed. Canning tells Dawkins to forward in every way the settlement of the dispute between Brazil and Buenos Ayres, if it should come before the congress. Secondly he tells him to represent, "not by direct official intimation but you should not disguise the sentiments of your Gov[ernmen]t",¹ that Great Britain hopes the new states will adopt those principles of maritime law on which she has uniformly acted. "And you will take care to have it duly understood that our determination to act upon these principles, as it has not been shaken by European confederacies, so it will not be altered by any Resolution or combination of the States of the New World." The old contention of the United States that "free ships make free goods" was of course directly opposed to this. If the Spanish-Americans agreed with the United States, therefore, there might be serious trouble. Despite all his liberal and conciliatory ideas, Canning was immovable as adamant when he thought the honor or interest of England really concerned. He evidently did upon this occasion, and the words above quoted show that exclusively English policy which Adams described as the characteristic of Canning. Here then were the beginnings of a serious dispute, which the differences in the conference however rendered harmless.

Canning proceeds to define the general attitude of England toward the Spanish-American governments. He requests information about their feelings towards each other, and the degree of influence in their concerns, which they may appear inclined to allow to the United States of North America. You will understand that to a league among the States, lately colonies of Spain, limited to objects growing out of their common relations to Spain, H[is] M[ajesty]'s Gov[ernmen]t would not object.

But any project for putting the U[nited] S[tates] of North America at the head of an American Confederacy, as against Europe, would be highly displeasing to your Gov[ernmen]t. *It would be felt as an ill return for the service which has been rendered to those States, and the dangers which have been averted from them, by the countenance and friendship, and publick declarations of Great Britain; and it would too probably at no very distant period endanger the peace both of America and of Europe.*²

¹ This method of representation was used by Dawkins throughout the congress.

² The italics are my own. A passage of almost equal strength is to be found in further instructions of March 18, 1826, Canning to Dawkins (Public Record Office,

It is hardly possible to overrate the importance of these words; they show the policy to the full, the attempt to detach the Spanish-Americans from the United States at all costs, by reminding them alike of the past services and the present power of England.

The two questions of real importance, which absorbed the attention of the congress, were the means of obtaining recognition from Spain for her revolted colonies, and the question of Cuba. In the first case the Spanish-American republics desired recognition from Spain, less because they feared her than because they feared complications or embroilments with France. Spain desired money, and therefore the question of a purchase scheme, of paying a sort of tribute in return for recognition, was discussed. It was eventually rejected. Canning had instructed Dawkins to offer the good offices of England for reopening negotiations with Spain, but refused to recommend or give an opinion on this purchase scheme. This plan was eventually thrown out by the congress.

Meanwhile Gual, the Colombian representative and the chief leader of the congress, read some published despatches of Everett, the United States minister in Spain. These had already been officially published, and were distinctly unfavorable in their criticism of the English attitude at Madrid. Among other things they stated, though quite inaccurately, that Mr. Lambe, the English ambassador at Madrid, had not been active in his exertions to persuade Spain to grant recognition. The astute Mr. Dawkins paid his almost daily visit to Gual on June 26,¹ and found him somewhat cold and incredulous as to the good wishes of England. Mr. Dawkins was surprised, went home and read the papers, and thereupon discovered the reason of this coldness in Mr. Everett's somewhat heated despatches. He promptly wrote to Gual and flatly contradicted Everett's state-

F. O., Colombia 50*). He has received a treaty between Colombia and Mexico (signed October 3, 1823) which serves to define the objects of the congress as: (1) "To confirm and establish intimate relations between the whole and each of the American States"; (2) "To serve as a council on great occasions; a point of union in common dangers; a *faithful interpreter of public treaties*, in cases of misunderstanding; and as an arbitrator and conciliator in disputes and differences". Canning comments: "If by the 'American States' in (1) are intended *only* the States heretofore Colonies of Spain; and if the functions, assigned to the Congress in (2), are to be discharged *only* between *those* States, there is no disposition in the British Govt. to question the propriety. . . . [You must] let it be known that an association in such mutual engagements of any State not partaking of the Spanish character, would be viewed by your government with great jealousy as approaching to that species of league of the Americas against Europe, which you are already apprized His Majesty could neither acknowledge nor approve." The italics here are Canning's.

¹ See the story in Dawkins to Canning, Public Record Office, F. O., Colombia 50*. Everett's chief despatch is dated October 20, 1825.

ments; finally he supplied Gual with copies of various despatches from England, which proved the exertions and sincerity of English attempts to secure recognition. English ascendancy at the congress was soon and completely recovered. Gual talked "unreservedly" to Dawkins "of the imprudence of the United States, of the errors committed by Mr. Everett, and of the mischief which may be done by the indiscreet publication of his correspondance [*sic*]". Gual further promised to bring a project of English mediation between Spain and the colonies before the congress. Here was another source of irritation between the United States and England. It was increased by the signing of a general confederative treaty between the Spanish-Americans on July 15. That treaty was one arranging for a common army and mutual defense between Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Guatemala. It contained the clause, "any American State may be admitted into the Confederation within a year after the signature of the treaty." Dawkins promptly inquired of Mr. Gual whether this principle extended to the United States. His answer was, "Certainly if they will declare war against Spain." This was disquieting, and it is to be presumed that Mr. Dawkins then clearly defined the attitude of England and her opposition to the United States' joining such a league. However, as the United States had no intention of declaring war and never joined the league, the question dropped.

It was on the question of Cuba that events really turned. Cuba has well been termed the "Turkey of transatlantic politics", for the destiny of Cuba was the problem which engaged the attention of all the diplomatists of the age, of Bolívar and Villèle, of Canning and Adams. As early as October, 1822,¹ Canning had feared that the United States desired to seize Cuba. He wrote to his cousin, the English ambassador at Washington,² mentioning evidence of various sorts from the press, and from the reports of the officers of the United States navy, etc., etc. He concluded that the "grounds of suspicion are not such as to warrant our imputing a Design [to the United States] that is not avowed: and a jealousy manifested without cause is apt to suggest the very Evil which it deprecates." He also details French fears of English designs on Cuba, and similar fears on the part of the United States about England. To quiet these fears he told Stratford to make an express disavowal to the United States of any English designs on Cuba. But suspicion was

¹ George Canning to Stratford Canning, October 11, 1822, Public Record Office, F. O., America 165. Indorsed "Secret".

² George Canning to Stratford Canning, December 7, 1822, *ibid.*

everywhere. Adams probably did not believe Stratford, and both England and the United States feared the French. Thus arose a strange kind of triangular duel, France suspecting England and the United States, the United States suspecting England and France, England suspecting France and the United States.

The suspicions appear to have been well-founded only in the case of France, where aggressive designs on Cuba were maturing in the dreamy brain of Chateaubriand¹ (then foreign minister of France) and were transmitted by him to Villèle. They also had a modicum of truth with regard to the United States. Secretary Adams² did not indeed desire to annex Cuba, but he desired to make it possible for Cuba to join the Union and become incorporated with the United States. This was one of the reasons why Adams declined to join with Canning in a joint declaration against the Holy Alliance in September of 1823. Had Adams brought the United States into line with Great Britain, both countries would have been pledged by Canning's provision that neither contracting state should acquire fresh territory. Adams saw that Cuba might solicit a union with the United States, but would not with Great Britain. Hence Adams held off, refused the joint declaration, and enunciated the Monroe doctrine in the presidential message of December 2, 1823. Adams made it possible for Cuba voluntarily to incorporate herself with the United States, and hoped that she would do so. This was the extent of his design upon Cuba. It was not grasping or aggressive like that of France, but it was not disinterested like that of Canning. The latter's idea was as follows: he certainly never had any notion of annexing Cuba for England, but he desired to maintain the status quo. If that was impossible, he was resolved, whatever happened, not to allow either France or the United States to annex or secure it. In 1825 he made a definite offer of guaranteeing it to Spain, on condition of her recognizing her revolted colonies to be independent states. Spain supinely refused, and toward the end of 1825 Can-

¹ *Œuvres Complètes* (ed. of 1902), XII. 363 *et passim*.

² *Memoirs*, VI. 177-178; for his suspicions of English designs on Cuba see *ibid.*, 203. In 1823 Monroe amended a despatch of Adams to this effect: that the United States had "no intention of acquiring any portion of the spanish possessions for ourselves, nor shall we ever do it by force". Adams brought on a debate in the Cabinet (November 21) and had the passage in question struck out! *Ibid.*, 193-196; AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, VIII. 36, 38-39. At one time, indeed, Canning had offered to guarantee Cuba to Spain as the price of her recognition of her revolted colonies, and of peace; but Spain had refused. This was not so great a departure from neutrality as was now planned by Adams. Canning had made this offer in order to insure peace; Adams uttered sentiments and resolutions which might prolong war.

ning was therefore faced by a new phase of this disagreeable problem. Bolivar and his friends were openly announcing their design of "liberating" Cuba; and to "liberate" Cuba Canning saw was to give the United States a pretext for interference. France was not much to be feared. She had already been threatened with war by Canning, if she intervened in the New World. In any case the fleet of England and the opposition—moral or otherwise—of both North and South America made her attempts impossible. France was not dangerous as an enemy but might be useful as an ally to check the United States. The latter power was infinitely the more dangerous because of the silent moral influence it might exert, and because it might interfere in Cuba, after Bolivar and his liberating armies had driven out the Spaniards.

Matters were complicated in the autumn of 1825 by the appearance of a French squadron off the coast of Cuba, which came ostensibly to collect a debt from Hayti. The French army had prefaced its march into Spain in 1823 by declaring that it only massed on the frontier so as to form a quarantine to prevent yellow fever and constitutional principles from coming over the Pyrenees. The French might well preface a naval attack on Cuba by an announcement that they merely intended to collect a debt from Hayti. Adams was not the man patiently to suffer this, and he prepared vigorously to resist, in case of a French attack on Cuba. Negotiations were entered into between the English and American governments, with reference both to the designs of France and to the designs of Bolivar. Vaughan, the English minister at Washington, conversed with the new Secretary of State, Henry Clay, on the latter subject, and actually "suggested an interference by the United States of America to dissuade the Mexicans and Columbians from making any attack upon Cuba". Canning heard this with immense indignation, for it ruined all his plans. He promptly disavowed Vaughan, and wrote him fresh instructions on February 8, 1826:¹

If it had been intended that you should treat . . . in a matter so delicate, as the proposed interference of neutral Powers to controul the legitimate operations of belligerents against each other, You would not have been left without instructions, upon a point of as much novelty, as delicacy and importance. If [went on Canning] the United States think their interests likely to be affected by the continuance of the war between Spain and the new transatlantick States they are probably right, and perfectly at liberty to employ their good offices to bring about a pacification.

We have long endeavored to do so but in vain; and Spain has been uniformly the recusant party. If the United States think that particular

¹ Public Record Office, F. O., America 209.

interests of their own require that a certain operation of war should not be undertaken by one of the belligerents,—it is a question, and a very nice one for them, . . . but it is manifest that we have not the like interest either to induce or to justify us in so unusual an interposition. . . . If it be merely the interests of the United States that are concerned, that ground of interference can only belong to them, nor is there any obligation upon us, to share the odium of such an interposition.

Such then was the situation when the Panama congress met, Bolivar and his friends openly proclaiming their intention of attacking Cuba, France darkly pursuing her own designs, the United States openly proclaiming its intention of checking Bolivar in its own interests, Canning holding the balance aloof and neutral. He saw and took the opportunity of dividing the United States and the Spanish-American republics on this Cuban question, and of contrasting the moderation of England to the latter with the more aggressive attitude of the United States. In his instruction to Dawkins on March 18, 1826, he inclosed copies of despatches to and from France and the United States.

You will see how earnestly it is desired by the U[nited]*S[tates], by France and by this country that Cuba should remain a Colony of Spain. The B[ritish] Gov[ernmen]t indeed, so far from denying the right of the new States of America to make a hostile attack upon Cuba, whether considered simply as a possession of a power with whom they are at war, or as an Arsenal from which expeditions are fitted out against them, that We have uniformly refused to join with the U[nited] S[tates] in remonstrating with Mexico and Columbia against the supposed intention, or intimating that we should feel displeasure at the execution of it. We should indeed regret it but we arrogate to ourselves no right to controul the operations of one belligerent against another. The Government of the U[nited] S[tates] however professes itself of a different opinion. It conceives that the interests of the U[nited] S[tates] would be so directly affected by either the occupation of Havannah by an invading force, or by the consequences which an attack upon Cuba, even if unsuccessful, might produce in the interior of the island, that the Cabinet of Washington hardly disguises Its intention to interfere directly, and by force, to prevent or repress such an operation. Neither England nor France could see with indifference the U[nited] S[tates] in occupation of Cuba. Observe, therefore, the complicated consequences to which an expedition to Cuba by Mexico or Columbia might lead, and let the States assembled at Panama consider whether it is worth while to continue a war, the only remaining operation of which, (that is likely to be sensibly felt by their adversary) is thus morally interdicted to them by the consequences to which it would lead.

As all know, the result of the congress was complete failure. It is probable that even the much-vaunted project of an attack upon Cuba by the Spanish-Americans was only a threat to dispose Spain toward recognition. The vast scheme of a united army of Spanish-

American confederates was concluded upon paper but was never realized in fact. One result only followed, that the policy of Canning had certainly done something to make the United States an object of suspicion to the Spanish-Americans. This is shown by the despatch of Dawkins to Canning upon October 15, in which he summed up the general results of the congress. The United States, he says, had failed to get any commercial treaties in its favor, owing to the opposition of Mexico and Peru.

The general influence of the United States is not, in my opinion, to be feared. It certainly exists in Columbia, but it has been very much weakened even there by their protests against an attack on Cuba, and by the indiscretions they have committed at Madrid.¹

In all this the general policy of Canning is clear. According to Adams the European and American continents were to be regarded as being in water-tight compartments; according to Canning there was to be a free intercourse between them, and American powers were, if necessary, to play their part in European politics. Canning sought to induce the United States into a joint declaration with him against the Holy Alliance in 1823, and failed. Circumstances drew him away from the United States in later years, but he did not scruple to introduce American influence into European affairs. On October 13, 1825,² he inserted the following most significant passage in his instructions to the English ambassador at Constantinople. The Sultan is to be warned of insulting too grossly, by his acts, the moral opinion of the world:

The recent events in the Western hemisphere have approximated, as it were, the different divisions of the world to each other, and have brought new Powers to bear on every question of political struggle or change, in whatever part of the globe it may arise. The Porte cannot doubt that all the inhabitants of both Americas to a man, are in their hearts favourers of the Greek cause, and might at no distant period become active co-operators in it. This is not the language of intimidation, it is that of truth.

The contrast between the policy of Canning and that of Adams is very significant. Adams had, in the strongest manner, disclaimed any idea of anything but the merest expression of academic sympathy with the Greek struggle against the Turks, and had overruled Monroe with reference to this point in the autumn of 1823.

The ground that I wish to take [writes he in his diary³] is that of earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European powers

¹ Public Record Office, F. O., Colombia 36.

² Public Record Office, F. O., Turkey 133, quoted in my *Life of Canning*, 213.

³ November 21, 1823, *Memoirs*, VI. 197-198, quoted by Reddaway, *Monroe Doctrine* (ed. of 1898), 64.

by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe; to make an American cause, and adhere inflexibly to that.

England was desirous that America should mix in European politics, and for this reason: England had no entangling alliance either with monarchies in Europe or with republics in America; any interference or mingling of one with the other was bound to turn to the advantage of England. So much then for Canning's attempt to introduce America into Europe.

In attempting to break down that part of the Monroe doctrine which forbade America to be used for future European colonization, Canning used several means. As we have seen, the recognition of America was decided upon partly in order to teach the new states to lean upon England, not upon the United States. At the congress of Panama Canning played on the fears and jealousies excited between the Spanish-Americans and North-Americans over the question of Cuba. One further phase or aspect of his policy remains to be noticed, his attitude toward the Oregon question. The actual question of rights has never been definitely settled either way. What Canning felt on the subject is clear enough. Astoria had been made over to the United States in 1818. Canning commented upon this to Liverpool on July 7, 1826:

... think what a task it will be to justify this transaction to Parliament, if upon this transaction we rest our justification for abandoning the whole N. W. Coast of America to the Yankees. *I feel the shame of such a statement burning upon my face by anticipation.*¹

Canning announced his intention of taking his stand immovably upon the forty-ninth parallel of latitude. The English boundary was to extend to that degree on the south, and no consideration would induce him to recede from this position. He was induced to this course by what he conceived to be the just claims, the honor, and the interest of England. He saw "that the ambitious and overbearing views of the [United] States are becoming daily more developed, and better understood in this country",² and he was resolved and determined to check them. Also he saw the advantages England would gain from an eventual "immense direct intercourse between China and what may be, if we resolve not to yield them up, her [England's] boundless establishments on the N. W. Coast of

¹ E. J. Stapleton, *Some Official Correspondence of George Canning*, II. 73; the italics are my own. On Astoria see Public Record Office, F. O., America 129, 165-168; on Oregon, America 191-192. There is not much in these two volumes on the Oregon question not indicated or described already in Stapleton.

² Stapleton, *op. cit.*, II. 73.

America.”¹ For these reasons Canning decided to assert the claims of England and check the pretensions of England’s great American rival.

The avowed pretensions of the United States to put themselves at the head of the confederacy of all the Americans, and to sway that Confederacy against Europe (Great Britain included) is *not* a pretension identified with our interests, or one that we can countenance or tolerate. It is however a pretension which there is no use in contesting in the abstract, but we must not say anything that seems to admit the principle.²

If Canning was not prepared to contest it in the abstract, he certainly was in the concrete. Hence his firm stand on the Oregon question was due to the advantages likely to accrue to British trade with China and British prestige in America. There was a further and unexpressed reason, and that is that Canning could not but have perceived the advantage of retaining this boundary, in order to bring England nearer to Mexico. For that state he had an especial care, both because of its resources and because of its proximity to the United States. He saw that it would be probable that any expansion of the United States would take place toward Mexico. Adams contemplated the eventual incorporation of Texas in the Union.³ He also endeavored to advance the United States boundary to the River Bravo del Norte, but was overruled by his colleagues in the Cabinet. Here again would have been Canning’s opportunity to use every fresh aggression from the United States to teach the Spanish-Americans that their true friend and ally was not the United States but England. Every such attempt of the United States would frighten Mexico and increase the bond between her and England.

Here then emerges a policy, definite, compact, and coherent, a resolute resolve not to admit the Monroe doctrine, a determination

¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

² Canning to Vaughan, February 18, 1826, Public Record Office, F. O., America 209.

³ Incorporation, not annexation. J. T. Morse, *John Quincy Adams* (ed. of 1898), 131, 135, 266–267; Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 178. There is a most significant passage on Mexico in William Huskisson’s *Speeches* (London, 1831, three vols.), III. 579–580, May 20, 1830: “If the United States have declared that they cannot allow the island of Cuba to belong to any maritime power in Europe, Spain excepted, neither can England, as the first of those maritime powers—I say it fearlessly, because I feel it strongly—*suffer the United States to bring under their dominion a greater portion of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico than that which they now possess.*” The italics are my own. This passage has a greatly added interest when we reflect that Huskisson was the devoted follower of George Canning, and had special knowledge of American affairs as joint-commissioner with Stratford Canning in the conference with Rush about Oregon in 1824. It may reasonably be deduced that, in the above-quoted passage, he is voicing the sentiments of his deceased master in foreign policy.

to bring the Spanish-American states into close relations with England. The Old World was to be revived with the vigorous life of the New, the New to be tempered with the moderation of the Old, England to hold the balance between them. It is impossible not to admire the boldness and extent of the design, the vastness or profundity of its conceptions. Great indeed was the insight which looked so far ahead as to see the commercial advantages of a trade between China and northwest America, or to find in Mexico the most hopeful of Spanish-American states. On December 17, 1824, Canning wrote to Granville: "The deed is done, the nail is driven, Spanish America is free; and if we do not mismanage our affairs sadly, *she is English*." In Canning's later policy may be found the explanation of this apparently cryptic sentence. England did "mismanage [her] affairs sadly"; for no English statesman after him realized, as Canning did, that the future lay as much in the New World as in the Old. The utter impotence of the Spanish-American republics could perhaps not have been foreseen, and was a cause of failure apart from the defects of British statesmen. But none the less the entire devotion of Palmerston and Aberdeen to affairs European explains much of the success of United States policy.

We are now in a position to understand what seem the strange comments of Adams and Rush upon Canning's policy. The first thought his policy entirely English, the second called Canning "a Briton, through and through;—British in his feelings, British in his aims, British in all his policy and projects."¹ This characterization is strange to Englishmen. The deliverer of Europe from the toils of the Holy Alliance acquired no territory but only influence for England. To Englishmen it seems that, though Canning may have loved England best, his heart yet beat high for the general interests of the world. Yet Canning's later attitude toward America explains this characterization, for during that time he was straining every nerve to foil the United States, and hence the judgment of its diplomatists upon him. Yet even toward America the policy of Canning was marked, in many respects, by a noble disinterestedness. At no time did he contemplate using disturbances in the New World as a pretext for seizing exclusive advantages for England. Annexation of territory is an object supposed by most other nations to be the key-note of England's foreign policy. At least it had no part in the plans of England's greatest foreign minister, during whose second period of office

¹ Richard Rush, "Character of Mr. Canning", in *Occasional Productions* (Philadelphia, 1860), 190; Adams's view may be seen in W. C. Ford, "John Quincy Adams and the Monroe Doctrine", *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, VII. 680.

not a single inch of territory was annexed. All Canning ever aimed at was to exalt the influence of England and the principle of non-intervention. In only two cases did he ever make any attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of states in the New World: in the one case when he offered to guarantee the stipulations of the treaty between Brazil and Buenos Ayres in 1826, in the other when he offered to guarantee Cuba to Spain in 1825. In both these cases his attitude was exceptional, and he stood to gain no exclusive advantage for England. He showed great disinterestedness by offering to Portugal and Spain most generous terms as the price of their recognition of Brazil and the Spanish-American colonies respectively. He agreed in each case that the mother-country should enjoy commercial advantages superior to those of any other nation, a concession of extraordinary generosity. He never claimed in commercial negotiations to get an exclusive or preferential treatment, but only an equality with other nations.

On the other hand, Adams aimed always at securing commercial treaties with Spanish America on the basis of exclusive treatment. And as with commercial, so with political advantages. In September, 1823, Canning offered to associate England with the United States in a joint declaration against the Holy Alliance, pledging neither to seize nor to occupy territory. Adams refused, because he desired (as Canning did not for England) to leave the door open for the incorporation, if not for the annexation, of such states as Texas or Cuba. Adams may have been right to refuse on the exclusive ground of the interests of the United States, and his declaration of the Monroe doctrine was certainly a most brilliant stroke of policy. But that Canning in his later policy was following the dictates of a larger and more tolerant doctrine seems also clear, though that the line which he adopted was likely to lead at length to conflict between the United States and England seems also unfortunately true.

The United States have now established beyond dispute their claims to forbid future European colonization in the American continent. But at least few can read without interest the views of the great English statesman, whose last years were spent in endeavoring, by every means of diplomatic skill and ingenuity, to check the pretensions of that Monroe doctrine which is inseparably associated with his own name and that of Adams. All must rejoice that, through whatever means, that conflict was avoided; and, since Americans have never refused a tribute to the genius of Canning, Englishmen should be the last to refuse to acknowledge that of Adams.

H. W. V. TEMPERLEY.